

Maury Island Aquatic Reserve

Site History

The Maury Island Aquatic Reserve includes approximately 3200 acres of aquatic tidelands and bedlands. The reserve boundaries extend from Neill Point to the shores between Point Robinson and Luena Beach. The reserve includes all of inner and outer Quartermaster Harbor and extends approximately ½ mile offshore from the extreme low tide line.

The site was formally withdrawn from leasing by Commissioner of Public Lands Jennifer Belcher on November 17, 2000.

Aquatic Reserve Program

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages about 2.6 million acres of aquatic lands on behalf of the public. Legislature established three types of reserves (WAC 332-30-151) to help ensure environmental protection for lands managed by DNR. Using this authority the Commissioner of Public Lands withdrew six sites from leasing to be considered for Aquatic Reserve status during 2000.

During 2002 DNR developed an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Aquatic Reserves Program. The final EIS was adopted in September 2002.



Site Evaluation

All six sites withdrawn from leasing in 2000 will be evaluated for Aquatic Reserve status during 2003. These sites will be evaluated using designation criteria identified in the programmatic EIS. Guidance for the use of these designation criteria is currently being developed by DNR with the assistance of an external peer review committee.

The evaluation of sites for Aquatic Reserve status will be accomplished by a Technical Advisory Committee. They will visit each site and make recommendations to the Commissioner of Public Lands. DNR staff are collecting all available information regarding each of the six reserve sites to be used during their evaluation.

Natural Resources

The Maury Island Aquatic Reserve was originally selected due to many of its environmental attributes. These include a productive bay (Quartermaster Harbor) which contains eelgrass, forage fish spawning and rearing grounds, and is fed by streams used by anadromous fish. The herring stock in Quartermaster Harbor is one of the largest in southern Puget Sound and the fourth largest in Washington. The southern shores of Maury Island are believed to be important rearing and migratory corridors for anadromous fish. Quartermaster Harbor is recognized by the Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area due to populations of Western Grebes that winter in the area.

Site Management

Following the decision of the Commissioner of Public Lands regarding Aquatic Reserve status, DNR will begin a State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) public process to develop management plans for each site. This management review process will occur for sites designated as Aquatic Reserves as well as those that will no longer be part of the Aquatic Reserve Program.

DNR expects to work with a range of partners including other agencies, tribes, local governments and organizations to develop and implement management plans for Aquatic Reserves.

Aquatic Reserve Timeline

